

Washington, DC – On Tuesday, May 18, the US House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly (357-32) to pass Congressman Harry Teague's national "Katie's Law". The Katie Sepich Enhanced DNA Collection Act (H.R. 4614) is a

bipartisan bill that encourages states to maximize the potential of forensic DNA to solve and prevent violent crimes by collecting a DNA sample upon arrest at the same time as fingerprints -- for certain felony crimes.

"Katie's Law simply allows law enforcement to treat DNA evidence left at the scene of a crime as they do finger prints. The fact is that the science has advanced and we should allow law enforcement to use all the technology available to them, including the fingerprint of the 21st

century, to reduce expensive and unjust false convictions, bring closure to victims by solving cold cases, better identify criminals, and keep those who commit violent crime from walking the streets," said Harry Teague in a statement on the House floor today. "Jayann and Dave have experienced something that no parents should ever have to -- the loss of a child. We have the power through advanced DNA collection to make one less parent grieve for a child, one less husband grieve for a wife, or one less child lose a parent."

Katie's Law is named after Katie Sepich, from Carlsbad, New Mexico. Katie was 22 years old when she was brutally raped and murdered in Las Cruces, New Mexico. If New Mexico had at that time required a DNA sample to be taken upon arrest, Katie's killer would have been caught three months after the murder when the murderer was arrested for another predatory crime.

Instead, the killer was released back onto the streets, it was three long years before he was finally apprehended again and linked to Katie's murder.

Harry Teague has worked with Katie's parents, Jayann and David Sepich of Carlsbad to develop this national law. The Sepiches traveled to Washington, DC to watch the vote from the gallery of the House of Representatives.

"While today was a bittersweet moment, it is such an important milestone in the fight to use DNA evidence to take predators off our streets. We're very proud of this measure and how it will help save lives across all 50 states," said Jayann Sepich. "We are so grateful to Congressman Teague for his courageous leadership on this bill. All New Mexicans would be proud to know how hard Harry Teague worked to get this bill passed as quickly and smoothly as possible."

Key law enforcement and victim's rights groups have continued to offer their endorsements of the legislation since it was introduced in February, including the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN), the Surviving Parents Coalition, National District Attorney's Association, and National Sheriff's Association.

The bill will now head to the Senate for consideration.

Earlier today, Harry Teague [spoke in support](#) of Katie's Law on the House floor.

###